

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

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S E C R E T CAIRO 9640

NODIS CHEROKEE

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR IS EG US

SUBJECT: TANNER, PERSHING MISSILES AND EGYPTIAN CRITICISM

REF: A) STATE 231054; B) STATE 231055

1. I SPOKE TO FAHMY TODAY ABOUT TANNER'S ARTICLE AND WENT
THROUGH THE POINTS THAT YOU WISHED MADE. I SAID WE UNDERSTAND
EGYPTIAN SENSITIVITY ABOUT PUBLICITY GIVEN TO LEAKS
ON THE PERSHING MISSILE, BUT HE SHOULD KNOW THAT DESPITE
SURFACE APPEARANCES RESULTING FROM THIS PUBLICITY, IT IS
TOTALLY MISLEADING. SITUATION RE PERSHINGS IS PRECISELY
AS IT WAS PRIOR TO NEGOTIATION OF SEPT 4 AGREEMENT. I ALSO
READ HIM YOUR REPLY TO HOTTELET. FINALLY, I STRESSED YOU HAD
POINTED OUT THAT MANY POLITICAL THINGS ARE GOING TO HAPPEN
BEFORE THE 1980'S, WHICH IS EARLIEST PERSHINGS CAN BE
AVAILABLE, EVEN IF WE DECIDE TO PROVIDE THEM, WHICH WE HAVE
NOT.

2. ISRAELI REQUEST FOR THE PERSHING AND OTHER LONG-
LEAD TIME ITEMS WHICH WE ARE STUDYING SHOULD BE VIEWED
IN CONTEXT OF LONG-STANDING SUPPLY ARRANGEMENTS AND NOT RPT NOT
AS DRAMATIC DECISION THAT SUDDENLY ESCALATES LEVEL OF
ARMAMENTS. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT EGYPTIANS NOT CONTRIBUTE
TO FUELING ARGUMENTS OF YOUR CRITICS IN THE US. I NOTED
VARIOUS VOICES IN CONGRESS AND ELSEWHERE HAVE ALREADY
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SPOKEN OUT AGAINST PROVIDING ISRAEL WITH THE PERSHING

AND EMPHASIZED YOUR CONCERN THAT EGYPTIAN PUBLIC CRITICISM COULD UNDERMINE THIS DOMESTIC REACTION.

3. FAHMY SAID HE HAD NOT RPT NOT SEEN THE TANNER ARTICLE. I THEREFORE READ IT TO HIM AND, AT HIS REQUEST, GAVE HIM A COPY. HE EXPRESSED ANNOYANCE AT SAYYID MAREI'S STATEMENTS AND SAID HE WILL COMPLAIN ABOUT THEM TO THE PRESIDENT THIS EVENING. SO FAR AS STATEMENTS ATTRIBUTED TO HIM ARE CONCERNED, HE NOTED WITH SOME ANNOYANCE THAT HIS TALK WITH TANNER HAD BEEN OFF THE RECORD AND NOT RPT NOT FOR PUBLICATION. TANNER HAD APPARENTLY VIOLATED THIS RULE BECAUSE OF WHAT FAHMY REGARDS AS TANNER'S ADVERSE ATTITUDE TOWARD YOU. FAHMY DENIED HE HAD CRITICIZED THE US AS TANNER ALLEGES. HE HAD INDEED MADE COMMENTS ABOUT ISRAEL'S TACTICS.

4. FAHMY AGREED THAT EGYPT SHOULD DO NOTHING TO ADD FUEL TO THE FIRE, BUT SAID HE ALSO WANTED TO MAKE A FEW POINTS. FIRST, YOU HAD NEVER AT ANY TIME MENTIONED THE PERSHING TO SADAT OR TO HIM OR TO ANY SENIOR EGYPTIAN. THE LANCES, YES, BUT NOT THE PERSHINGS. THUS, WHEN THE NEWS BROKE ABOUT THE PERSHINGS, IT WAS A STUNNING SURPRISE TO THE PRESIDENT AND TO HIM. SADAT CANNOT UNDERSTAND WHY, IF THE PERSHING WAS ON ISRAEL'S LAST AUGUST SHOPPING LIST, SOMETHING HAD NOT RPT NOT AT LEAST BEEN SAID TO HIM ABOUT IT. SECOND, WHILE HE WAS GLAD TO HAVE REAFFIRMED WHAT I HAD EARLIER TOLD HIM THAT NO RPT NO DECISION HAS BEEN MADE ABOUT THE PERSHING, WE SHOULD APPRECIATE THAT SO LONG AS THERE IS ANY SUGGESTION THAT IT WILL EVENTUALLY BE SOLD TO THE ISRAELIS, EGYPTIANS AS WELL AS OTHER ARABS WILL BE AGITATED. THERE WILL BE PRESSURES TO OBTAIN SIMILAR WEAPONS JUST IN CASE WE ULTIMATELY DECIDE TO SELL THE PERSHINGS TO ISRAELIS. THIRD, THE ISSUE IS NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO DIE DOWN. AS WE PROBABLY KNEW, THE ARAB FONMINS OR DEPUTIES MEETING N NEW YORK HAVE ISSUED A STATEMENT DENOUNCING POSSIBLE US PERSHING SALES TO ISRAEL AND ARAB LEAGUE SYG MAHMOUD RIAD OR ONE OF THE ARAB FONMINS WILL DOUBTLESS TAKE IT UP WITH YOU.

5. GOE UNDERSTANDS OUR POSITION AND WILL NOT RPT NOT, ON ITS PART, DELIBERATELY FAN THE BLAZE. HOWEVER, WE
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SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT GOE CANNOT APPEAR TO BE INDIFFERENT TO A SITUATION OF SUCH CRITICAL IMPORTANCE TO THE ARAB STATES. HE THEN ALLUDED TO PRESIDENT FORD'S STATEMENT ABOUT POSSIBLE US ARMS SALES TO EGYPT, WHICH SADAT HAD HEARD AS WELCOME NEWS. HE HOPED WE MEAN THIS, AND DECRINED RON NESSEN'S SUBSEQUENT EXPLANATORY COMMENTS.

6. AGAIN REFERRING TO THE TANNER ARTICLE, FAHMY
POINTEDLY NOTED HE HAS AS YET RECEIVED NO RPT NO REPLY
TO HIS RECENT LETTER ABOUT ISRAELI PLANS TO ESTABLISH
A SETTLEMENT IN RAFAH (CAIRO 9497). NOR HAD HE
RECEIVED WHAT HE CALLED THE PROMISED ASSURANCES FROM
US THAT ISRAEL WILL MAKE NO RPT NO DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGES
IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. HE RECALLED THIS HAD
BEEN DISCUSSED DURING THE ALEXANDRIA SHUTTLE.

7. FAHMY EXPRESSED RESTRAINED GRATIFICATION AT YOUR
JUDGMENT THAT THE MOOD OF OPINION IS CHANGING INCREASINGLY
TOWARD RECOGNITION OF THE NEED FOR AN OVERALL ARAB-ISRAELI
SETTLEMENT. IN HIS VIEW, THIS CANNOT COME SOON ENOUGH.

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